



# Fostering the Parent

Family Support Network  
of the High Country

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## Tips for Shifting from School Year to Summer Break

As the school year draws to a close, you and your family probably view summer break as a well-deserved reprieve. If your child has learning and/or attention problems, it's important to recognize that the shift from school year to summer break (however welcome) represents a transition phase and may pose special challenges for your child.

Regardless of the summer plans you've made, you may want to ease into summer in a way that addresses your needs as well as your child's. Here are some tips to consider:

### Tips to Help Parents:

1. **Review the summer plans you've made to date.** Where there are gaps, brainstorm ways to address them, such as parents rotating days off work to stay home with younger kids on

unscheduled days.

2. **Post the family's summer schedule.** Mark activities (day camp, vacations, your teenager's work schedule, etc.) on a "family size" calendar posted in a central location. Be sure to note blocks of unscheduled time as well; that way, you can anticipate free time to use as you wish – even if it's just to enjoy a break in the action.
3. **Be prepared to be spontaneous.** Keep a running list of places and people to visit when time permits and the mood strikes. Summer — free from homework and tutors — is a good time to stop by the science museum, bike trail, or concert-in-the-park you can't seem to get to during the

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### AFFILIATED WITH:



Appalachian State University



Children's Developmental Services Agency of the Blue Ridge



Family Support Network of North Carolina



High Country United Way

## Upcoming Events

June 9: 6pm Challenging Behaviors Share Group, Boone Unitarian Universalist Church, Boone

June 9: 6pm Families with Children with Special Needs Share Group, Boone Unitarian Universalist Church, Boone

Call us for more information.

## Summer Reading Adventures for You and Your Kids

### Week 5: Enjoy the great outdoors

Pick wildflowers and press them between the pages of a heavy book until the end of summer.

Plan a backyard camping trip with a friend. List all the things you will need to survive.

Plan a family 'booknic' at your favorite outdoor spot, such as the beach, a park, or the woods. Pack lunch and plenty to read.

Collect shells at the beach or rocks along a trail. Use a nature guide to identify them.

Find something small enough to put in your pocket. Write or tell a story about it.

Look for shapes and designs in the clouds. Draw them.

Word game! Make a list of words to describe fireworks.

### Week 6: Visit fun places

An animal has escaped from the zoo! Make up a story about it. Tell it to a friend or family member – or write it down. Add pictures, if you'd like.

What museums are close to your house? Are there any old, historic buildings in the area? Find these places on a map. Find out what is on exhibit at the museums and why the old buildings are important.

Go back in time and pretend you lived in – or did business in – the oldest building in your area. Write a story about how you spent your time.

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## Tips cont.

school year.

4. **If you and/or your child thrive on routine, build as much of it in to your summer schedule as possible.** Even so, your routine may change every week or so; find ways to prepare for this transition. This may be as simple as mentally rehearsing the new routine (including daily wake-up time and preparation) with your child before the week begins. Remember: Transitions can be hard for parents, too!
5. **Ask other people** (spouse, family members, and neighbors) **for help** shuttling kids to activities and supervising them on their “days off.” Trade carpooling and kid-watching duties with other parents in your neighborhood.
6. **Don’t succumb to summer stress!** There is bound to be some bedlam and boredom in any household during the summer. When stress strikes, try to shrug it off and find humor in the situation.

## Tips to Help Kids with Learning and/or Attention Problems:

1. **Revamp — but don’t eliminate — your child’s daily routine.** A daily routine gives most kids with learning or attention problems a sense of structure and security. While certain tasks (like doing homework) can be dropped during the summer, new ones (like packing for daily swim lessons) may be added. For fun, you might

## Summer Reading cont.

Make a list of zoo animals. Sort them by different categories, such as type of animal (mammals, fish, etc.) or coloring (green, brown, striped, etc.).

Visit the zoo with friends or relatives and find the animals on your list.

Visit a museum or historical building with friends or relatives. Write a list of things you see that you didn’t expect.

Word game! Think of the softest animal or the oldest thing you’ve ever touched. Write a poem about it, but don’t use the word *soft* or *old*.

### Week 7: Become a publisher

Make your own joke book. Collect jokes and riddles from your family and friends.

Cut out pictures from an old magazine or catalog. Write a story about them.

Create a rebus story (a story that uses pictures to represent words). Write a short story, and then substitute pictures (that you draw or cut out) for some of the words.

Start a round-robin story. Write the beginning, then ask

loosen up on certain chores during the summer, like designating every Friday as “Don’t make the bed” day!

2. **Prepare your child for her scheduled activities.** If possible, visit the locations where he/she will be during day camp or day care in advance. Have your child talk to counselors, caregivers, as well as other kids who have enjoyed those same situations and settings.
3. **Have your child contribute to the family calendar.** Together, you can determine key dates (e.g., community pool opens for recreation swim, July Fourth barbecue) and have your child mark these on the calendar.
4. **Involve your child when preparing for family trips and activities.** Depending on his/her age, she can help you map out driving routes or make a list of the clothing and recreational gear the family will need.

**Encourage summertime learning.** Summer outings may present opportunities for your child to learn about history, geography, and nature. Look for “teachable moments” and encourage him/her to listen, read, take photographs, collect postcards, and keep a journal of his/her adventures. This type of learning can boost the self-esteem of a child who struggles in school.

By Kristin Stanberry, [www.schwablearning.org](http://www.schwablearning.org)

friends to add to it until it has an ending.

### Week 8: Watch the skies

Learn what birds live in your area. (Birds are described in books called Field Guides.) Wake up early to go bird watching and list the birds you see.

Which constellations can you see on a clear summer night? Look at the sky using a star guide to help you find the constellations.

People have been looking at the skies for generations. Ask a grandparent or a much older friend to tell you a story about his or her childhood.

The first UFO was reported in 1947. Read a science fiction book in honor of it.

Word game! Baseballs also fly through the sky in summer. Find a list of baseball teams in the sports section of the newspaper. Put them in A-B-C order.

Watch for weeks 9-10 in the next issue!

From [www.readingrockets.org](http://www.readingrockets.org)